



PSC NEWS

Missouri Public Service Commission

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PSC ESTABLISHES PERMANENT RULE FOR 2-1-1 SERVICE

Jefferson City (July 16, 2004)---The Public Service Commission has approved and will file with the Secretary of State a permanent rule providing the framework for 2-1-1 telecommunications service in Missouri. The permanent rule also contains requirements for an organization to be designated as a 2-1-1 provider.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has previously designated 2-1-1 as a national abbreviated dialing code for community information and referral services. The intent is to provide callers with direct access to organizations capable of making referrals to services such as housing assistance, counseling and hospice services that are not currently available through the 911 emergency code.

In order for 2-1-1 service to be provided in an area of the state, the information and referral service provider would need to file an application and have that application acted upon by the Public Service Commission.

"We hope that dialing 2-1-1 for information and referral services will become as well known to Missouri telephone customers as 911 is for emergency assistance," stated PSC Chairman Steve Gaw. "Seeing a need, the Commission acted in February of this year on an emergency rule which established a framework for 2-1-1 service in Missouri. We have already approved an application from the Heart of America United Way, Inc. to provide information and referral services via 2-1-1 in SBC Missouri exchanges in 16 western Missouri counties," added Gaw.

The 2-1-1 rule is intended to enhance the ability of the public to access services that provide free information and referral to community resources in situations that are not immediately life-endangering, but still represent a serious but less urgent threat to basic human needs and individuals' health or welfare.

Under the rule, a customer is not to be charged an additional 2-1-1 service charge by either the telephone company or the 2-1-1 provider for using the service.

When available in their area of the state, the abbreviated dialing code (2-1-1) will enable callers to connect with an information and referral provider without having to dial a seven or ten digit telephone number. Under the rule, an information and referral provider is an organization which would act as an intermediary, matching the person with the necessary combination of human services that will address the individual's needs.

The permanent 2-1-1 service rule will be in effect on October 1, 2004.

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